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The Month of
Safar

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The Month of Safar

Praise be to Allaah, and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allaah.

The month of Safar is one of the twelve Hijri months, and it is the month which comes after Muharram. Some of the (scholars) said that it is so named because of the emptying (isfaar) of Makkah (i.e., its people would all leave) when they traveled during this month. It was also said that this month is named Safar because they used to raid other tribes at this time, and they would leave those whom they encountered bereft of their possessions (sifran min al-mataa') – i.e., they would take all their belongings away and they would leave them with nothing. (See *Lisaan al-'Arab* by Ibn al-Mandhoor, part 4, p. 462-463)

Our discussion of this month will cover the following points:

1. What has been narrated concerning it from the Arabs of the *Jaahiliyyah*.

2. What has been narrated in Islam that contradicts the views of people of the *Jaahiliyyah* concerning this month.

3. Innovations and corrupt beliefs concerning this month that exist among people who claim to be Muslims.

4. What happened in this month of military campaigns and important events in the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

5. False ahaadeeth that have been narrated concerning Safar.

1. What has been narrated concerning it from the Arabs of the Jaahiliyyah.

The Arabs were guilty of two serious wrongdoings concerning the month of Safar. Firstly, they played about with it, making it earlier than it actually was or postponing it, and secondly, they had superstitions concerning it.

(1) It is known that Allaah created the year and the number of its months is twelve, four of which Allaah has made sacred, in which it was forbidden to fight, out of respect for these months. These months are: Dhu'l-Qa'dah, Dhu'l-Hijjah, Muharram and Rajab.

This is confirmed in the Book of Allaah, where Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

> **"Verily, the number of months with Allaah is twelve months (in a year), so was it ordained by Allaah on the Day when He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are Sacred (i.e. the 1st, the 7th, the 11th and the 12th months of the Islamic calendar). That is the right religion, so wrong not yourselves therein…"**
>
> [al-Tawbah 9:36]

The mushrikeen were aware of that, but they used to postpone it or make it earlier according to their whims and desires, such as putting Safar in place of Muharram!

They used to believe that 'Umrah during the months of Hajj was one of the most evil of actions. There follow some of the comments of the scholars on that.

(a) It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbaas (ﷺ) said:

> **"They used to think that 'Umrah during the months of Hajj was one of the most evil of actions on earth. They would make Muharram Safar, and they used to say, 'When the wounds of the camel's back heal up (after they**

return from Hajj) and the footprints of the camels vanish and the month of Safar passes away then (at that time) 'Umrah is permissible for the one who wishes to perform it." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1489; Muslim, 1240)

(b) Ibn al-'Arabi said: "The second issue: how postponing (al-nasee') was done:

(i) It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbaas that Junaadah ibn 'Awf ibn Umayyah al-Kinaani used to come on this occasion each year, and he would call out that no one could criticize Abu Thumaamah or reject what he said, and that Safar in the first year would not be sacred, then we would make it sacred one year and not the next year. They were with Hawaazin, Ghatafaan and Bani Sulaym. According to another version, he used to say, "We have brought Muharram forward and postponed Safar." Then the next year he would say, "We will make Safar sacred and delay Muharram." This was the postponement.

(ii) Adding. Qataadah said: Some of the people of misguidance deliberately added Safar to the sacred months. Their spokesman would stand up on this occasion and say, "Your gods have made Muharram sacred this year," and they would regard it as sacred that year. Then the next year he would stand up and say, "Your gods have made Safar sacred," so they would regard it as sacred that year. And they would say (that there were) two Safars. Ibn Wahb and Ibn al-Qaasim narrated something similar from Maalik, who said: the people of the Jaahiliyyah used to have two Safars, hence the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "(There is) no Safar." Ash-hab also narrated something similar from him.

(iii) Changing the time of Hajj. Mujaahid said with a different isnaad:

" 'The postponing (of a Sacred Month) is indeed an addition to disbelief...'

[at-Tawbah 9:37]

… they would perform Hajj in Dhu'l-Hijjah for two years, then they would perform Hajj in Muharram for two years, then they would perform Hajj in Safar for two years. They would perform Hajj in each month for two years until, when Abu Bakr performed Hajj that was in Dhu'l-Qa'dah, then when the Prophet performed Hajj it was in Dhu'l-Hijjah. Hence the Prophet (ﷺ) said in his sermon, according to the saheeh hadeeth:

> **"Time has completed a cycle and assumed the form of the day Allaah created the heavens and the earth."** Narrated by Ibn 'Abbaas and others.

This version was narrated by him. And he said: "The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said:

> **'O people, listen to what I say, for I do not know whether I will meet you again after this day in this place. O people, your blood and your wealth are sacred until the Day when you meet your Lord, as sacred as this day of yours in this month of yours in this land of your. You will meet your Lord and He will question you about your deeds. I have conveyed (the message). Whoever has had something entrusted to him, let him fulfil that trust.**
>
> **All riba is abolished. You shall have your capital sums, deal not unjustly and you shall not be dealt with unjustly. Allaah decreed that there should be no riba. The riba of 'Abbaas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib is abolished. All claims for blood-vengeance belonging to the jaahiliyyah period have been abolished. The first of those murdered among us whose blood-vengeance I remit is Ibn Rabee'ah ibn al-Haarith ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, who was suckled among Banu Layth and killed by Hudhayl."**

He was the first one whose blood-vengeance of the jaahiliyyah was abolished.

> **“O people, the Shaytaan has despaired of ever being worshipped in your land, but he will be pleased to be obeyed in any matter other than that, in matters that you may think of as insignificant. So beware of him in matters of your religion. The postponing (of a Sacred Month) is indeed an addition to disbelief, by which the disbelievers are led astray… Time has completed a cycle and assumed the form of the day Allaah created the heavens and the earth. The number of months with Allaah is twelve, of which four are sacred, three consecutive months, and Rajab Mudar which comes between Jumaada and Sha’baan…”**

…and he mentioned the rest of the hadeeth. (Ahkaam al-Qur`aan, 2/503-504)

(2) With regard to superstitions concerning the month of Safar, these were well known among the people of the Jaahiliyyah, and still exist among some of those who claim to be Muslims.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said:

> **“(There is) no ‘Adwa (no contagious disease is conveyed without Allah's permission), nor is there any tiyarah or Haamah (bad omens from birds), nor is there any (bad omen in the month of) Safar, and one should run away from the leper as one runs away from a lion.”** (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5387; Muslim, 2220)

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “The word ‘Safar’ was interpreted in several ways:

(i) that it refers to the well-known month of Safar, concerning which the Arabs were superstitious.

(ii) That it refers to a stomach disease of camels, which is passed from one camel to another, and that this mentioned in conjunc-

tion with the word ‘adwa (contagion) in the sense of mentioning something specific in conjunction with something general.

(iii) That ‘Safar’ means the month of Safar, and that what is referred to here is the postponing of Sacred Months by which those who disbelieved were led astray, when they would delay the sacred months and make Safar sacred one year and not the next.

The most correct of these views is that what is meant is the month of Safar, concerning which there were many superstitions during the Jaahiliyyah.

Times have no effect (on people’s lives) and Allaah never decreed that it should have any effect. Like any other month, both good and bad may be decreed during this month.

If a particular action is completed on the twenty-fifth of Safar – for example – some people note the date and say, “It has been finished on the twenty-fifth of this good month of Safar.” This is like refuting one innovation with another, because there are no good or bad months. Hence some of the salaf denounced those who, when they hear the hooting of an owl, say, “It is good, in sha Allaah.” It cannot be said that this is good or bad, it is simply the sound of a bird, like any other bird.

The four things which the Prophet (ﷺ) denied (in the hadeeth referred to above) indicate that we must put our trust in Allaah and be sincere and determined; the Muslim should not feel helpless when faced with these things.

If a Muslim does pay any attention to such things, one of the following must apply in his case:

Either he pays attention to them in deciding whether to go ahead or refrain, in which case he is basing his actions on something that is not real.

Or he does not pay attention to them with regard to deciding whether to go ahead or refrain, but he still feels some kind of worry or anxiety. Although this is not as bad as the first case, he

should not pay any attention to these things at all, rather he should depend only on Allaah.

The denial of these four things is not a denial of their existence, for they do exist; it is a denial of their having any effect on things, for the One Who affects things is Allaah. If there is a reason that is known to have effects, then this is a real reason, and any reason which is merely imagined is a false reason. So we deny its effect and it has no effect. ” (Majmoo’ Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, 2/113, 115)

2. What has been narrated in Islam that contradicts the views of people of the Jaahiliyyah concerning this month.

We have quoted above the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah narrated in *al-Saheehayn*, which explains that the belief of the people of Jaahiliyyah concerning Safar was reprehensible, and that is it simply one of the months of Allaah and it has no will of its own, it simply passes, subject to the control of Allaah.

3. Innovations and false beliefs concerning this month that exist among people who claim to be Muslims.

(1) The Standing Committee was asked:

Some of the scholars in our country claim that in the Islamic religion there is a *naafil* (supererogatory) prayer which is prayed on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar, at the time of *Duha* (mid-morning) prayer, (consisting of) four *rak'ahs* with one *tasleem*. In each rak'ah one recites *Soorat al-Faatihah*, *Soorat al-Kawthar* seventeen times, *Soorat al-Ikhlaas* 50 times, *al-Mi'wadhatayn* (the last two soorahs of the Qur'aan) one time each. This is done in each rak'ah, then one says salaam, and when one says salaam it is prescribed to recite

"And Allaah has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men know not…"

[Yoosuf 12:21]

…360 times, and *Jawhar al-Kamaal* (the essence of perfection) three times, and to finish by saying,

"Glorified be your Lord, the Lord of honour and power! (He is free) from what they attribute unto Him! And peace be on the Messengers! And all the praises and thanks be to Allaah, Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)."

[as-Saaffaat 37:180-182]

And they give charity to the poor, and they say that this aayah is especially for warding off the calamities which come down on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar.

They say that every year, 320,000 calamities come down, and all of that comes down on the last Wednesday of Safar, so that is the most difficult day of the entire year. But whoever prays this prayer in the manner described, Allaah will protect him by His generos-

ity from all the calamities that come down on that day, and they will not come around him, but they will affect those who could not do this prayer, like small children. Is this true?

The scholars of the committee replied:

Praise be to Allaah, and blessings and peace be upon His Messenger and upon his family and his companions.

We do not know of any basis in the Qur'aan or in the Sunnah for the naafil prayer mentioned in the question. We have no proof that any one among the salaf of this ummah or the righteous people of its later generations did this naafil prayer. Rather it is a reprehensible innovation.

It was narrated that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said:

"Whoever does an action which is not in accordance with this matter of ours [Islam], will have it rejected."

And he said:

"Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours that is not part of it, will have it rejected."

Whoever attributes this prayer and the things that are mentioned with it to the Prophet (ﷺ) or to any of the Sahaabah (رضي الله عنهم) is fabricating serious lies, and Allaah will give him the punishment for liars which he deserves. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 2/354)

(2) Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Salaam al-Shuqayri said:

The ignorant have the habit of writing down the verses of salaam such as:

"Salaam (safety) be upon Nooh (Noah) (from Us) among the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)!"

[al-Saafaat 37:79]

…etc. on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar, then they put them in vessels and drink it and seek blessings from it, and they give it as gifts to one another, because they believe that this will take away bad things. This is a false belief and a blameworthy superstition, a reprehensible innovation which must be denounced by everyone who sees it. (al-Sunan wa'l-Mubtada'aat, p. 111, 112)

4. The military campaigns and important events in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) which occurred in this month.

There are many such events, some of which we will refer to below:

(1) Ibn al-Qayyim said:

> Then he himself [the Prophet (ﷺ)] went on the military campaign of al-Abwaa', also known as Waddaan. This was the first military campaign in which he took part himself. It happened in Safar, twelve months after the Hijrah. The banner, which was white, was carried by Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib. He appointed Sa'd ibn 'Ubaadah in charge of Madeenah (in his absence), and he went out with the Muhaajireen only, to intercept a caravan of Quraysh, but there was no fighting.
>
> During this campaign, he made a peace treaty with Makhshiy ibn 'Amr al-Dumari, who was the leader of Bani Dumrah at his time, agreeing that he would not attack Bani Dumrah and they would not attack him, that they would never join any group to attack him and that they would never help any enemy against him. The treaty between them was written down, and the Prophet was away for fifteen nights. (*Zaad al-Ma'aad*, 3/164, 165)

(2) And he said:

> When Safar came (in 3 AH), some people from 'Adal and al-Qaarah came to him and said that there Muslims among them, and they asked him to send with them someone who would teach them Islam and the Qur'aan. So he sent six people with them, according to the report of Ibn Ishaaq. According to al-Bukhaari, the number was ten. He put Marthad ibn Abi Marthad al-Ghanawi in charge of them, and among them was Khubayb ibn 'Adiy. They went with them, and when they reached al-Rajee' – which is water belonging to Hudhayl, somewhere in the Hijaaz – they betrayed them and sought the help of Hudhayl against them. So they came and surrounded them; they killed most of them and took Khubayb ibn 'Adiy and Zayd ibn al-Dathinah prisoner. They took them to

Makkah and sold them there, because they had killed some of the leaders of Quraysh at Badr. (*Zaad al-Ma'aad*, 3/244)

(3) And he said:

In the same month of Safar, in 4 AH, there was the battle of Bi'r Ma'oonah (the well of Ma'oonah), which may be summed up as follows:

Abu Baraa' 'Aamir ibn al-Maalik, who was known as Mulaa'ib al-Asinnah, came to the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) in Madeenah. He invited him to Islam but he did not become Muslim, but neither did he seem far away from doing so. He said, **"O Messenger of Allaah, why do you not send your companions to the people of Najd to call them to your religion? I hope that they would respond."** The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"I fear that the people of Najd may harm them."** Abu Baraa' said: **"They will be under my protection."** So he sent forty men with him, according to the report of Ibn Ishaaq. According to al-Saheeh, the number was seventy, and what is narrated in al-Saheeh is correct. He put al-Mundhir ibn 'Amr, one of the tribe of Bani Saa'idah which was known as al-Mu'annaq, in charge of them. They were among the best, most virtuous and foremost Muslims. They travelled until they stopped at Bi´r Ma'oonah – which is between the land of Bani 'Aamir and the harrah (lava field) of Bani Sulaym – where they camped. Then they sent Haraam ibn Milhaan, the brother of Umm Sulaym, with the letter of the Messenger of Allaah to the enemy of Allaah, 'Aamir ibn al-Tufayl. He did not look at it, and he commanded a man to stab him in the back with a spear. When he was stabbed and he saw the blood, he said, "I have won, by the Lord of the Ka'abah [i.e., attained martyrdom]." Then the enemy of Allaah immediately urged Banu 'Aamir to kill the rest (of the Muslims), but they did not respond, because of the protection of Abu Baraa'. Then he urged Bani Sulaym, and 'Asiyah, Ra'l and Dhakwaan responded to him. They came and surrounded the companions of the Messenger of Allaah, and they fought until they were all killed, except for Ka'b ibn Zayd ibn al-

Najjaar, who was found wounded among the dead. He lived until he was killed at the battle of al-Khandaq. ‘Amr ibn Umayyah al-Dumari and al-Mundhir ibn ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Aamir were looking after the animals of the Muslims, and they saw a bird hovering over the battle field. Al-Mundhir ibn Muhammad came and fought the mushrikeen until he was killed along with his companions, and ‘Amr ibn Umayyah al-Dumari was taken prisoner. When he told them that he was from Mudar, ‘Aamir shaved his head and released him on behalf of his mother who was obliged to free a slave. ‘Amr ibn Umayyah went back and when he reached al-Qarqarah min Sadr Qanaah (a place), he rested in the shade of a tree. Two men from Bani Kilaab came and rested there with him, and when they slept ‘Amr killed them. He thought that he had avenged the deaths of his companions, but they had a treaty with the Messenger of Allaah, of which he was unaware. When he came (to Madeenah) he told the Messenger of Allaah what he had done, and he said, **“You have killed two people for whom I will certainly pay the diyah (blood money).”** (*Zaad al-Ma‘aad*, 3/246-248)

(4) Ibn al-Qayyim said:

When he set out for Khaybar, it was the end of Muharram, not the beginning, and he conquered it in Safar. (*Zaad al-Ma‘aad*, 3/339-340)

(5) And he said:

Section on the campaign of Qutbah ibn ‘Aamir ibn Hadeedah to Khath‘am.

This took place in Safar 9 AH. Ibn Sa’d said: they said: the Messenger of Allaah sent Qutbah ibn ‘Aamir with twenty men to a region of Khath‘am at the end of Tibaalah, and he commanded him to launch a raid. They went out with ten camels, which they took turns riding. They captured a man and interrogated him, but he would not speak, then he started yelling, raising the alarm, so they killed him. They waited until the people had gone to sleep, then

they launched their attack. There was intense fighting, resulting in many wounded on both sides. Qutbah ibn ‘Aamir killed whoever he killed, and they (the Muslims) took the cattle, women and sheep to Madeenah. It says in the story that the people regrouped and pursued them, then Allaah sent a great flood which came between them and the Muslims, so the Muslims drove the cattle, sheep and prisoners whilst they were looking on, but they could not cross the water until they had gone. (*Zaad al-Ma‘aad*, 3/514)

(6) And he said:

A delegation from ‘Udhrah came to the Messenger of Allaah in Safar of 9 AH, consisting of twelve men, including Jamrah ibn al-Nu’maan. The Messenger of Allaah said: **“Who are these people?”** Their spokesman said: **“Some people that you may know of; we are Bani ‘Udhrah, the brother of Qusayy on his mother’s side. We are the people who supported Qusayy and removed Khuzaa’ah and Bani Bakr from the valley of Makkah. We have relatives and families.”** The Messenger of Allaah said: **“Welcome to you, I know you well.”** They became Muslim, and the Messenger of Allaah gave them the glad tidings of the conquest of Shaam (Syria) and the flight of Heraclius to a well-fortified part of his country. The Messenger of Allaah forbade them to consult fortunetellers, and to offer the sacrifices which they used to offer, telling them that they were obliged only to offer the udhiyah (sacrifice of ‘Eid al-Adhaa´). They stayed for a few days in the house of Ramlah, then they departed.” (*Zaad al-Ma‘aad*, 3/657)

5. False ahaadeeth that have been narrated concerning Safar.

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

> Section of ahaadeeth which give the dates of future events.
>
> This includes ahaadeeth in which it mentions such and such a date, for example, "In the year such and such, such and such will happen" or "In the month such and such, such and such will happen."
>
> This is like the words of the big liar: "When the moon is eclipsed in Muharram, there will be a rise in prices, fighting, and the ruler will be distracted from public affairs, and when it is eclipsed in Safar, such and such will happen… " and so on, as the liar said concerning all the months.
>
> All the ahaadeeth of this type are false and fabricated. (*al-Manaar al-Muneef*, p. 64)

And Allaah knows best.

[Note: all translations are interpretations of the meaning.]